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THE
FAIR PARRICIDE
A
TRAGEDY
OF
THREE ACTS.

FOUNDED

On a late melancholy Event.



Anonymous

LONDON: Printed in the Year, 1752.

THE
PARADISE
OF
K. A. G. B. D. Y.
THREE ACTS



LONDON. Printed in the Year 1772.

PROLOGUE



F Love, in deep Distress, can ought prevail,
You'll prove attentive to our tragic Tale.
Our well-known Tale:—The base Deluder's
fled,
And the too fond, too credulous Fair is dead:
Guilty, or guiltless, who can surely tell;
A spotless Angel, or a Fiend of Hell?
To Heav'n alone we'll leave her dubious Case,
And strive to mend the World, thro' her Disgrace:
Fact, or not Fact,—yet still the MORAL'S all,
By which our Play To-night must stand or fall.
“ Sure none would to forbidden Pleasures rove,
“ That ever knew the Sweets of virtuous Love.
But bold!—Our Author dreads the Critick's Frown;
Conscious 'tis Humour only now goes down:
That the poor Bard is damn'd, who spends his Time,
In studying with Longinus, the Sublime;
That, in his tasteless Age, good Sense gives place
To Farce, to Ribaldry, and crude Grimace.
That Mother-Midnight's Whims Applause will gain,
When the most manly Scenes are penn'd in vain.
Yet still he hopes the softer Sex will hear,
Maria's Woes, and drop a tender Tear;
That, with Compassion, they'll espouse her Cause)
And give, for once, a PARRICIDE Applause.



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Blandford, *Father to Maria.*

Cranmore, *her Lover*

Goodman.

Physician.

Steward.

Two Gentlemen.

Keeper of the Prison.

Servants, &c.

W O M E N.

Maria.

Maid to Maria.



THE
FAIR PARRICIDE,

ACT I.

Enter CRANMORE.

CRAN.



ORTUNE and Nature were at War
when I was born;
The sickle Goddess fled the Field with
ev'ry Spoil,
Leaving Dame Nature but the Pride
of Birth,

To feed on scant Nobility and Name,
Hateful Exchange! O had I my happier Lot
For Blood but substituted pow'rful Gold,
Pleasure had known no Bounds: My thirsty Soul
Had then possess'd the Joys that starv'd Ideas

B

San

Can but faintly feel.——

Now Pride must bend to Pleasures sov'reign Sway,
And task the Heart it wants to gratify;
Else, at what Distance should I hold this purling Girl;
Or boldly seize the Prey I now decoy
With Honour's Lure, and the entrangling Marriage Net?
She comes——now for the soft'ning Scum of Love,
The soothing Arts of Flattery all prevailing Force!

Enter MARIA.

How fares my Soul's first Joy, my best Maria?
Clouded in Grief! what is't disturbs my Love?

Mar. A Subject that ever ministers extreme Joy or
Discord to me.—My Father, just return'd from those
Associates whom he ever leaves in a distasteful Sense of
Merit he at other Times justly applauds, has now let
loose, without Reserve, the Whole of their sagacious
Sentiments. His they are not; for 'tis impossible a
Man of Sense should think, at different Times, so dis-
tant from himself: And 'tis, indeed, almost as strange,
he should be thus prevail'd with to adopt Opinions from
such Men, in open Contradiction to his own; for in
his cool and more digested Thoughts, they have ever
the most favourable Turn towards you.

Gran. This, dear Maria, you know, most constantly
has prov'd our Lots when amongst that Herd of Fel-
lows: Or I am sometimes rather apt to think it the
Effect of Wine; since 'tis impossible they should har-
bour an intentional Evil to a Man they scarce have seen.

Mar. It may not be their Malice but their Vanity, in
offering their Advice against the Opinion of a Man,
whose

whose Understanding the World has judged with Candor of: 'Tis more than probable, my Father, in Openness of Heart, have deliver'd to these Men his Sentiments on our intended Marriage, they have obtruded their notable Advice and most sagacious Reasoning in Opposition to it.

Cran. But wherefore, from what Motives? I can suggest no one; except, indeed, Maria's Charms have raised some Rival in their Assembly.

Mar. That, I am well assured, is a Suggestion without the slenderest Reason. 'Tis, as I said, no other than their Vanity, in setting forth their most judicious Sentiments, and the Pride of changing his.

Cran. But is the yielding up his Purpose to weaker Judgments, correspondent with your Father's Knowledge and good Sense?

Mar. Yes, or with any other Man's good Sense and Knowledge. The weakest People have ever the least Diffidence; but Men of Sense are constantly dubious of their own Abilities; and more especially in Matters relative to the Disposition of a favourite Child.

Cran. Therefore, since 'tis evidently apparent he has at least an Indifference, if not a total Disapprobation of my Pretensions, why will my dear Maria still object to renewing the innocent Expedient of those sympathetic Powders, which, when before made use of, you cannot but admit had an evident good Effect in the Alteration of your Father's Conduct and Sentiments, greatly in my Favour?

Mar. That an Alteration did appear in my Father's Disposition, I cannot but acknowledge; but you'll pardon me, if I ascribe it to some sudden Flow of Blood

The FAIR PARRICIDE.

and Spirits, rather than from your grand Specifick ; which, I must be allowed to think, has a little Efficacy upon the Mind, as I presume it would upon the Body : — 'Tis superstitious and chimerical.

Cran. However superstitious you may deem the Force of such Powders, I affirm to you upon my Honour, I have known most amazing Effects produced, and such as I shall not venture to describe, not being now in a Disposition to be laugh'd at. But since you pronounce so fully upon their Simplicity and Innocence, where lies the Danger of the Experiment?

Mar. In the Shame of being discovered to be guilty of such egregious Folly.

Cran. You are too scrupulously cautious; there cannot be the least Danger of Discovery : Or should that happen, all Resentment must subside in reflecting on the happy Consequence proposed, and the perfect Innocence of the Means.

Mar. I cannot like it; but you have power almost to turn my strongest Disinclination to approving. I will if you transmit them to me, try their power, tho' so opposite both to my Opinion and my Will. But have a Care, I charge you, by our Love, take Heed no Error be committed in the preparation; Drugs are many of them alike in their Appearance, but widely different in their Operations, and have been fatally mistaken—— shudder at the Thought! Leave it to Time, and his Return of Temper.

Cran. Leave it to his returning Conference with my implacable and bitter Enemies, who in my Absence doubtless, will ply their strongest Force wholly to root out every kind Impression that may remain, and render

my Return, as fruitless, as, I find, have been the Sentiments I fondly cherish'd of your unalterable Constancy and Truth, which surely cannot stand upon the firmest Basis, when so much Diffidence appears in my Care of protecting that Life, which Duty, Inclination, and my Interest it is to lengthen—I am deceiv'd, she never meant it as a reproachful Hint, against the possibility of my Neglect, in preserving the Father of her, in whom alone my every Happiness is center'd.

Mar. You are indeed deceiv'd and too impatiently have canvass'd what I said; wrongly represented what was meant no more than necessary Caution, as an Apprehension of wilful Negligence. I will i'th Morn'ing give you my determin'd Resolution—I must attend my Father—to whom, anon, I'd have you come; I shall endeavour, with my utmost Skill, to sooth his Temper to more placid Thoughts, and form him to our purpose.

(*Exit.*)

My purpose must be form'd by Means more permanent—
And if I read your Heart aright, it bends
Inclining to that Goal; but disapproves the Steps,
That lead, with Danger, to the wish'd-for End.
In hazardous Resolves, it fares with Women,
As when with Sicknefs press'd, they fain would rise
To Health, but dread the stimulating Force
Of Corrosives, and the embitter'd Draugh.
My tender Patient! But they must be giv'n——
And since fond Nature seems abhorrent thus
To shrink beneath the wholesome Recipe,
I must disguise it still with palliating
Sweets—but shou'd Reproach and Hate, succeed?
No! th' happy End obtain'd, the Means are soon forg
But then she'll dread the Hand that minister'd

To him th' eternal Cure of all his Ills,
 May, in another Fit of Fondness to fend her to rest——
 No, her Vanity, I think, will against that Fear——
 And th' Opinion she possesses of my Truth and Love;
 Which yet, indeed, remain entire and firm——
 But Marriage is the Lover's trying, toilsome Test,
 And shakes the Youngster Cupid's Empire in the Breast;
 Blunts all his Arrows, breaks his brettle Bow——
 'Till new Allegiance, from Dominion grow:
 Again the little Victor triumphs; and again,
 In gay Supremacy, does blither Laws maintain. [Exit.

SCENE Changes.

BLANDFORD and MARIA.

Mar. Let me intreat you, Sir, look with a kinder Eye; receive him with the Mildness, of that Aspect, when you pronounc'd me his.

Bla. You too well know, Maria, the Power you hold o'er an indulgent Father.

Mar. It were the Depth of black Ingratitude, not to acknowledge you have ever prov'd beyond my Wishes so——Do not now recede from that Indulgence, in the single Instance on which you know my Life depends. Oh! do not blast the Hopes you cherish'd in their bloom and suffer 'em to whither in despairing Anguish!

(Weeping)

Bla. Do not weep, my Girl! I have an other View in my Objections to this Match; but what, a Father's Fondness for an only darling Child suggests——You know I have ever thought most highly of his Merit——

And

And were the fatal Bar of a preceeding Contract but remov'd, I thou'd rejoice to call him Son.

Mar. It will be soon remov'd—he waits but your returning Smile to take his Leave; and then sets forward on his Journey to obliterate this pretended Contract; to accomplish which, he solemnly assures me, no Impediment remains but Time, and his immediate Presence.

Bla. May Heav'n, if his Cause be just, assist him with Success!

Mar. Have I your Leave to tell him, Sir, you wish to see him?

Bla. You have.

[Exit Maria.]

Yet; my Heart presages something of fatal Consequence, productive from this Intercourse; but wherefore did I weakly give that Countenance, which now my Apprehension seems to dread? Why partial Love, indulgent to my Child, diminish'd Danger and overlook'd Events. Yet, th' Event may prove successful, and my Daughter's Happiness compleat. I'll turn my Hopes and Wishes there; since, in this Marriage, I perceive her every Joy is centered; and mine can only keep their Price with her—She comes, and with her
Cranmore.

Enter CRANMORE and MARIA.

My Daughter, Sir, in froms me, you intend forth with to undertake your Journey homeward, in order to the accomplishing the long depending Suit that has impeded still your Happiness and hers.

Cra.

Cra. And *yours*, I hope, might justly have been added
Yes, Sir, I waited only for the influencing Aid of your
paternal Blessing, to speed my Way, with prosperous
Omens, and my Return with the eventual Good my
Cause deserves,

Bla. It has been long depending, *Cranmore*; and a prosperous Issue long assur'd. It should seem, me thinks, from its protracted Length, new Difficulties rose; some fresh Pretensions I am yet a Stranger to,

Cra. Pretensions, Sir, indeed, and *such* so weakly founded, they have no other Plea for their Existence, but the Delays and tedious Forms of Courts; and your Acquaintance, Sir, in such Procedures, will readily admit the Force of the Objection.

Bla. My Acquaintance with the Forms in other Courts than those in *England*, is slight and inconsiderable. But hear, I know, if Facts want the Support of full, substantial Evidence, their quick Determination is with Ease obtain'd.

Cra. With ours then, 'tis widely different—the Insufficiency of Evidence furnishes new Pretensions of Delay, till ampler and more full may be provided—and tho' 'tis manifest, such cannot be procur'd, 'tis urg'd as an essential Part of Equity, not to restrict the Time to narrow Bounds.

Bla. I'll not dispute the Practice—Farewel, and may your Cause meet the Success it merits! [Exit.

Cra. Cold! and chilling! did'st thou, *Maria*, hear those freezing dubious, Words?

Mar. I cannot think'em, either one or other:—Wou'd you, my Father shou'd have wish'd a Cause Success in which he stands so deep concern'd, that had not Merit for its Basis?

Cra.

Cra. O! Those Words imply Despondency and Doubt! were utter'd with such faint, unfeeling Breath, I cannot think 'em warmly meant.

Mar. Indeed your Fears are fruitless; I know'em meant with all Sincerity and Truth their Import can admit. Before your Entrance here, he spoke in highest Estimation of your Merit, and I am well assur'd you stand in his Affections second to myself,

Cra. I fain wou'd flatter that endearing Hope! Sooth this fatal Absence from my lov'd *Maria* with pleasing Prospects of returning Joy in his continu'd Constancy of Mind; since *you* pronounce it such—I must, I cannot but believe it so ---and yet——

Mar. Banish your Doubt, and let the little Space, while yet I have you, be fill'd alone with Love; let every softer Thought supplant these anxious Fears that hang upon your Heart, and thus disturb your Peace.

Cra. It is in the to render Peace, where sharpest Grief, and rude, tumultuous Anarchy maintain their Weeping wild Dominion, of melting with that persuasive Voice; the stern Commands of Tyranny and savage Fierceness,

Mar. If Flattery's fair Delusion dwells not on your Tongue; if I have power but *half* so prevalent; and bounteous Nature kindly has bestowed the smallest Portion of thy lavish Praise; we shall not need to fly to Superstition's baneful Aid, or the magnetic Power of Spells and Drugs to stem the Current of that returning Tide of Opposition, you are alarm'd again, may flow within my Father's Breast.

Cra. I know thy *Power*, yet dread thy *Loss*; *Fear* was twinn'd with *Hope*; and each due proportions, spring or fade——they live or die together.

Mar. If they are Twins, their Birth was sure unnatural——*Hope* is the Growth of Summer Suns——*Fear* a wintry Plant, and nourished only by declining Heat; I find I feel it so; my *Hope* is equal to my *Love*; it spurns at abject *Fear*, and scorns the base Alliance; I will not doubt your *Love*, but yet must blame your *Fear*.

Cr. If I have *Fear*, 'tis the Result of *Love*; but Words are feeble proofs of Passion; let me haste to put it to the Trial——follow the philosophy; chase every *Fear* from out my Breast with the enlivening *Hope* of my Return, to bless me in thy faithful Arms.

Mar. Must you so soon be gone? Alas! I blame your Fears; but now my own are rising fast, tumultuous Doubts alarm me for your safety, the inclement Season, and the length of Way, the infested Roads, and your imperious Warmth of Opposition.——All, all, crowd at once, and shake my Apprehension.

Cr. You bear, unmov'd and resolute, substantial Cause of *Fear*, and shrink beneath the empty Forms and Phantoms of it. Do not, my *Love*, perplex thy tender Soul with Doubts, whose Causes want Existence, would mine were founded on no flightier Motives.

Mar. Come, I will shake this Woman's Weakness off; you cannot boast superior *Love*; nor will I yield the Claim in *Courage*; go, and return swift as Expectation bids, and ardent *Love* instructs.

Cr. Those Monitors, indeed, will press the tardy Hours on,
Give Wings to dull Delay, and speed its Course.
Even Law, that in its snail-like pace drags

Tedious

Tedious on; in greedy Haft shall suck the ripen'd
Clusters of the yellow Fruit, its Client,
With laborious Thrift and Industry,
Had meant his Winter's Store, and Nature's glad Re-
past.

Fond Expectation, and desiring Love,
Shall ev'ry slow Impediment remove.
When blest and blessing, mutual Joys shall rise,
In the returning Transport of *Maria's* Eyes.

[*Exeunt.*]





A C T II.

Enter MARIA.

MARIA.

THough I have slender Faith in Dreams, those
 I have had to Night, alarm me with unusual
 Terrors: They brought my Mother full into
 my View; not in her living Form but cloathed, as
 Painters and warm Imagination picture to our Fancy
 the *angelic* Beings: Yet Dread and apprehensive Dan-
 ger sat upon her Face, unlike the Calmness and Sere-
 nity *Idea* gives of those *celestial* Shapes: Softness and
 Awe were blended in her Voice, and broke in Accents
 of Command and tenderest Caution: She said, beware,
 beware my Daughter; Danger imminent is hovering
 o'er thy Father——thee: And could Misfortune
 reach those blest Abodes where the All-merciful Supreme
 has deign'd to place thy Mother, she too would feel
 the dire Effects that are in thee alone to scatter and
 disperse. Here agonizing Terror waked me; and in
 a few succeeding Minutes, soft-melodious Music sooth'd
 my sicken'd Fancy with Harmony I never heard before.
 Such a Perplexity, such Contradiction of Events, sup-
 ports

ports while it explodes the enthusiastic, superstitious Tenets my *Cranmore* has still endeavoured to possess me with: But from that little Sense and Argument I'm Mistress of, have still opposed, though now begin to hold in some Suspence and Doubt; and I have heard it said, or somewhere read, that to deliberate in Error, is to be lost.

Enter MARIA's Maid.

Maid. Madam, these Letters, with a Parcel.

Mar. Thou hast been still my better Genius—— but now art double laden with auspicious Fortune bring'st me glad Tidings from my Love, and dost dispel the frightful Phantoms of the Night with opening Day,——Dispose that Parcel safely, then return. *[Exit Maid.]*

These Letters are of different Hands! they are not both from him.——This is a female Scrawl, I do not know, if she's a Lover, she'll excuse the preference given to Love; nor tax my Curiosity or Breeding, that yield their Claim to more impatient Wishes.

[Breaks open his Letter, reads.]

“ My lovely dear *Maria*,

I have, thank Heaven! escaped these Dangers which at our parting thy Tenderness and Love so warmly apprehend for me; and this Morning arrived here: It is yet impossible to give my dear *Maria* any farther Detail of the hateful business that brought me hither, than she is already acquainted with: But am morally certain, a few Days will put it in my Power, to send thee an Account will banish all our Apprehensions; except these, which, I

confess; yet obstinately remain with me, of your Father's fluctuating Disposition; which, to correct and settle, I have sent you some of those Powders, whose Qualities have so frequently occasioned little Altercations betwixt us; but Love as constantly has banished: And by that Love, I must intreat, let my Opinion, weakness, Folly, call it what thou wilt, let it prevail in the administering them, which will conciliate every Doubt; and I am well assured, put your Father beyond the Possibility of a Relapse into his former Sentiments of Opposition.

It is not in Words, my dear Maria, to describe with what heavy Pace, what anxious Sollicitude, the Hours have dragged their tedious Journey since our Separation; and been only supportable in the blest enlivening prospect the Transport of our Meeting will afford.

'Tis now past Nine; and the envious Post obliges me to quit the friendly Pen, that thus assists me almost to converse with my beloved Maria: But, as you have often said, Love is much too powerful for Reason; and I forgot, without the Friendship of the first, the last would prove ineffectual, at this Distance, to convey the Sentiments of a Heart, whose real Existence is in thy Bosom, and only breathes in that of

CRANMORE."

And shall such Truth, such Tenderness, meet Repulse, in a Request he presses for so ardently, from idle apprehensive Consequences? There is no Consequence imports me half so much, as giving him a moment's anxious Pain.—Yes, I will obey thee, though Life were in the Hazard.

Enter

Enter MAID.

Maid. Madam, your Father ordered me to let you know, he is somewhat indisposed, and would gladly see you in his Study.

Mar. I'll instantly attend him. [Exit Maid.

Indispos'd! this will prove a fair Occasion then to obey my *Cranmore's* warm Sollicitation: And yet — Ha! wherefore is this sudden Check to my Resolves? — Now my last Night's fatal Dream renews its Terrors! methinks, my Mother stands again in stern Denunciation, threatening some fatal, sad Catastrophe! From whence? from what? It cannot be that *Cranmore* plays me false! perish the Thought! I will no more indulge these mad Chimeras of the Brain. Alas! involved in Thought, I have forgot this other Letter: I cannot give it reading now, but must attend my Father. —

Be calm my Mind, nor let suspicious Doubts restrain

A Deed, if I omit, will give my *Cranmore* Pain.

[Exit

SCENE changes to another Apartment.

Enter a Gentleman and Steward, meeting.

Gen. Is my Friend, your worthy Master, Sir with in?

Stew. He is; but from some Disorder, either in Mind or Body, is retired, with a Desire not to be disturbed.

Gen.

Gen. I do not wonder if it be Disturbance of the Mind: The strange Infatuation of his Daughter's Passion, her Power in prevailing upon him to hearken to a Marriage with a Man, whom, he is well informed, has such Engagements to another, which, I am told, will hardly be dissolved: These cannot but create Reflections in a thinking Man; that, doubtless, must disturb his Peace.

Stew. I cannot say from whence the Malady arises; though, if it be of Body, 'tis more than probable it has derived its Source from the Inquietudes of Mind you mention. And it has often, Sir, been Matter of Reflection to *me*, as well as *you* that an Alliance, so fraught with Difficulty and Danger, should have so long engrossed *her* Heart, or *his* Attention.

Gen. For her Attachment, I can readily account: I have known her from her Childhood; which, almost in its Dawn towards a Capacity of thinking, gave early Proofs of something more than female Resolution. This, strengthened by the Aid of Understanding superior to her Sex, most unfortunately gives her a Turn of thinking, blendid with Vanity, that rarely suffers her to quit the purpose she has once determined on, though Dangers e'er so imminent attend its Execution.

Stew. You know her Disposition well: but still it must be owned, if, in some Instances, (as her Love, indeed) she preserves with strong, unalterable Resolution; so in her steady, fixed Obedience to her Father, she has supported ever the same Equality of Mind.

Gen. You judge with Candour and with Truth. I'll take some fitter Opportunity to see my Friend for
adjusting

adjusting the Affair which brought me hither.—Pray inform him, I most sincerely wish him Health.

Stew. I shall acquaint him, Sir.

Gen. Your Servant.

Stew. Sir, your Servant.

(Exeunt severally.)

Enter Blandford with an open Letter, and Maria.

Bla. Why will you thus pursue a Passion you evidently see so much disturbs my Health of Body and of Mind? That must entirely prove the Bane of yours, not only of your present, but eternal Peace. Here I receive Accounts, that are widely opposite to those he has imposed upon us. Can you consent to give your plighted Faith to one, who must be Bankrupt in return; whose Country's Laws devote him to another's Arms? Can you submit to stamp perpetual Marks of blasting Infamy on your unsullied Fame, and meanly share the Man to whom another pleads a prior Right?

Mar. Pardon me, Sir, if in return to these unlooked, so harsh Demands, I answer by requesting, why has this Man now grown obnoxious to you, received your Countenance, Protection, the hospital Welcome of your House? Why have you suffered the Progress of this Passion, undisturbed, to take its Course? Wherefore, in earliest Dawn, did you not check its Growth? Which then, perhaps, had cost your Daughter little Pain to obey: But having long receiv'd the Sanction of a Father's kind Indulgence, I fear, beneath the Warmth, her Love is grown too powerful for Duty to subdue.

Bla. Are these Reproaches suitable Returns for such Indulgence?

D

Maria

Mar. They are not, Sir, Reproaches, but such Remembrances, by which alone my former and my present Conduct must be and condemned or justify'd by you, myself, and all the World.

Bla. If, from a too partial Fondness, in gratifying every Wish of yours, I weakly harkened to Conditions my Judgment since condemns, shall it be imputed to me as wavering and unjust, when every Day new Lights are open'd to strengthen and support that Judgment?

Mar. It will, I fear, to me, be imputed as wavering and unjust (were it in my Power) to discountenance the Addressee of a Man, who has received the Confirmation of a Father's solemn Word, and the Injunction of a dying Mother's last Command.

Bla. When that Command was given, she, alas! was ignorant of those Impediments which since have risen, simply to discharge you from Obedience to such Command.

Mar. With Submission, Sir, every Impediment that now appears, had shewn themselves long before that melancholy Period, and were as fully known to my dear Mother as yourself.

Bla. If they were known, they were by no Means properly consider'd by her or me: and since her dying Commands seem so highly to have their Influence, methinks my living ones should carry, too, their Weight, when supported thus by Reason, Justice, Truth and every Circumstance a Father's Tenderness suggests, for the preserving a beloved and an hitherto obedient Daughter. *Mar.* Would I had ne'er receiv'd encouragement to harbour that soft, delusive Passion, that, spite of all my Resolution

Resolution, struggles in my Breast, and will, I fear render me less deserving of those tender Epithets.

Bla. Still you thus upbraid a Father's Fondness? making *that* the Source of an unwarantable Passion, which must have taken Root, e'er I could be solicited to give the *Encouragement* you thus insinuate has caused its fatal Growth and mischievous Maturity?

Mar. Oh, Sir! I do not *blame*, but must *lament*; the too indulgent Tenderness, I fear, will render all my future Hours a Series of irremediable Bitterness and Anguish.

Bla. And can you, Child, imagine the Possession of the desir'd Object could in the least Degree alleviate that Bitterness and Anguish, when conscious of another's first superior Claim? And the Deceiver too, perhaps, either from Conscience, or more probably a pall'd Imagination recurs *himself* to that *superior Claim*? Has *Love* so totally engrossed your Heart, that *Pride* has left no Balance there? Have Education, and the Honour of your Sex, lost all their Power?

Mr. No, Sir, thank Heaven! I have a Sense as clear and undisturbed, by the insinuating Lures of Vice as should become your Daughter, or any of my Sex, whose Birth or Fortune might give them room to challenge a superior Rank in Principles of Truth and Virtue. Nor can I in the least conceive my Passion for Mr. *Granmore* deviates from such Rules, since I am afraid it is but too melancholy a Truth, were all my Countrywomen to reject each Man who has been guilty of such Acts of Gallantry, few of them would enter in the married State.

Bla. That, I am perswaded, is indeed too melancholy a Truth,—but ours, and the Country's Laws that give him Birth differ widely in that Particular, and he is

bound by them; and whoe'er should influence him in their Violation, inevitably partakes his Guilt.

Mar. I must confess, Sir, that I don't perfectly comprehend you. Suppose a Native of any *arbitrary* Government abroad, resident in *England*, should join with you in Opposition to Measures you judg'd tyrannical, (were we unhappy enough to labour under such) could you in Reason, suppose yourself to have contracted Guilt in violating the Laws of *his* Country in such an Opposition: Or could he himself be supposed to have incurred any Guilt in it, where such Laws did not exist?

Bla. O! they are by no Means similar Cases.

Mar. Pardon me, Sir, Truth and Justice eternally are similar; though the Instances in which they are exercised often differ.

Bla. And Truth and Justice I hope you will admit in all Countries, and Instances exact proper Obedience from Children to their Parents; which I expect from you, in giving *Cranmore* my Sentiments upon the Facts this Letter here contains; and my absolute Determination henceforth never to listen to the Man who has once deceived me in so capital a point.—Of this, I charge you, on your Duty, fully inform him. *(Exit.)*

Mar. Severe Injunction! yet I will punctually obey, whatever be the Torment I endure, in *writing*, or be in *reading*; which, or I am deceived, will be mutually felt by *both*. How unequal is the Lot afforded in the Dispensations of human Life! How directly counter to each other do our Affections run! 'Tis hard, those to the parent and the Lover should not condescend, where our undisguised Wishes languish to make each reciprocally happy; but beware *Maria*! is not this
taxing

taxing supreme Direction? I should rather concluded with Mr. Pope, that *whatever is, is right*.

And therefore patiently submit my Fate,
To him who best can poise th' unequal Weight,
Who views, dispassionate, the Maze we tread,
And thro' inexplicable paths can lead
Up to the Regions of eternal Day;
Tho' Thorns should spread, and Darkness fill the
Way. (going)

Enter Steward hastily.

Stew. Madam, my Master, this Instant, entering the Garden, was, on the sudden, seiz'd with an unusual pain, that scarce afforded him the power of calling for Assistance; the Servants with much Difficulty supported and led him to the parlour, where he remains almost insensible.

Mar. Oh! my Fears! What have I done? (partly
aside.)

Stew. Madam!

Mar. I shall betray my Folly! *(aside)* Alas! I am fearful some Things I urg'd perhaps too warmly to my Father in his Study, but a few Minutes since, which caus'd his parting with me in Resentment, may have brought on this violent Relapse into the Illness, he before complain'd but lightly of.

Stew. No, Madam, that scarce can be the Cause; I met him coming down the Study-Stairs, and could perceive no Marks of Agitation of any Kind, that then bespoke the Approach of an Attack thus violent.

Mar. Let a physician instantly be sent for; but
wherefore

wherefore do I loiter here, when he is in Danger? Oh Cranmore! Cranmore! (Exit.

Stew. Wherefore is *that* Name repeated with such warm Emotion? it is because she thinks the News of *Blanford's* Illness wou'd prove a Circumstance of Grief. She is deceived ——— I rather think even his Death would be considered in a different Light; by this so-much admir'd Lover, well knowing that Event would give unbounded Sway to the Extravagance of passion, with which his Mistress doats, and hitherto has been alone restrain'd by that Sense of Duty she has ever most inviolably paid her Father. And I much fear the Dissolution of that Bond would loosen all Impediments with her, of previous Marriage-Contracts, that now are insurmountable.

A Servant Enters.

How does our worthy Master?

Serv. Sir, in extreamest Agony ——— the physician has declar'd, he thinks him poison'd.

Stew. Poison'd by whom?

Serv. That is yet unknown ——— But on *Maria's* hearing the Opinion, she instantly left the Chamber, ran to her own, and presently returning, threw into the Fire of another Room, a Number, as they say, of Letters, with a Paper, containing Powders of a whitish Colour, part of which being recover'd and examin'd are found a poison of the strongest Kind.

Stew. Amazing! The calling on her Lover's Name with that Emotion I fear is now accounted for: Is the Physician now attending?

Servant

Serv. Yes, Sir.

Stew. Come with me, I have some Orders for you.
(*Exeunt.*)

Maria *Enter with a Letter.*

Mar. Horror and Distraction! Where shall I hide me? Whither fly? Oh! Had my impatient Love but suffer'd me to read this Letter, previous to that from this inhuman, faithless Wretch! The Terrors that surround me, had been then avoided! (*looking on the Letter*)—here she affirms, in the most solemn manner, her marriage with this perjur'd man, and signs his Name. Wou'd I had never known it. Oh! 'tis a Knowledge will for ever blast me with the abhorr'd, detested Name of Murderers! Parricide! Reason and Life together can ne'er support it! One or both must take their Flight! I am excluded too my Father's Presence, and should I murmur? Oh no! I will exclude myself all human Eyes; but his would stab in every pointed Look. They should, they shall do so; for I will supplicate to see him, and receive from those reproaching, dying Eyes, the Stings that are not to be felt in corporeal Pain, tho' exercis'd with more than Indian Savage Arts of Cruelty——

*They would be softest pleasure in the poise,
Against a Father's failing Eye and fault'ring Voice,
In Death pronouncing from a Daughter's Hand,
He feels the haughty Tyrant's stern Command—
Else might his lengthen'd Hours have calmly run,
The tranquil, hoary Race of ev'ry promis'd Sun.*

[*Exit.*]

BLAND.

Her Father discovered on a Couch, Servants, Physicians, &c.

Bla. Where is my Daughter? Why does she absent herself?

Phy. 'Twas your Direction, Sir, she should not have Admittance.

Bla. You misconceiv'd my Orders—Cou'd you suppose I meant to exclude my Child her dying Father's Presence?

Phy. Yes! When there is cause to fear that Child has prov'd the fatal Instrument of cutting short that most indulgent Father's Life.

Bla. Wherefore will you thus imbitter the few short Hours my Fate allots—Alas! betray'd by Love, seduc'd by specious Arguments, and won by fond Credulity to listen to the Wiles of him, whose Honour, Sense and Truth she most implicitly believ'd, she has destroy'd a Life, I know she ever ardently has wish'd might be preserved.

Phy. Pray Heaven it prove so!

Bla. I cannot bear the Doubt—These hard Suggestions are far more bitter, give me severer Anguish than my approaching Fate; I will not hear a Breath that whispers the remotest Tendency of Guilt in her; let her be sent for—I feel Life fleeting fast away, and e'er it quits its Mansion, must take my Child within these dying Arms; give her my last paternal Blessing; and sooth her anxious Heart with soft Forgiveness—Forgiveness! that implies a Guilt, and who that knows the

the Course of her continu'd firm Obedience, her filial Fondness and Affection, can suggest they were the Masks of black Hypocrisy?

MARIA *Enter.*

Mar. (kneeling) My Father! Do you, in kind Indulgence to your Daughter's bursting Heart, and her repentant Tears, remit that just, tho' sharp Injunction that has so long excluded her your Sight? Can your relenting Mercy view me with the Eye of soft Forgiveness for my fatal Folly? Receive me to your Arms with kind, paternal Marks of your indulgent pity for that hateful Weakness, that has, thro' faithless, base, delusive Wiles, destroy'd the Fountain of your Life, and mine? Shou'd you not rather blast me with your dying Breath? Curse my devoted Head? And blot this Paricide for ever from your Heart?

Bla. Beware! Lest in this wild Extravagance of frantic Grief, tho' madly utterest what the Tongue of Justice, by casual Circumstance supported and concurring Testimony, must, in Defence of her impartial Sway, pronounce, was the impulsive power of unregarded Guilt,

Mar. Alas! my Father, Death is all my Wish, but in that heavy Burthen of imputed Guilt, lie Thorns, indeed, and poignant pains, too sharp for Innocence, thus clouded in the Maze of Folly and perplex'd Appearances, to bear——yet, if your lenient Voice absolve me, its pressure and its pangs from other Tongues will lose their Force, and I submit with patience to the Justice of my Fate; for just it is that I should die; no

E

lost

less Atonement can suffice to expiate to the World even the possibility of a Crime like Parricide.

Bla.. Live! Live! My Child! but henceforth shun the enticing Wiles of Love's pernicious Lure. Banish the Voice of Flattery from your Ears the Source of every Ill befalls your Sex: I am Faint—support me—Let me,—while yet my Strength will suffer me, pour forth my earnest prayer for thy protection—O thou Supreme! In Mercy soften all her Anguish! Support her Weakness, 'gainst the Cries of Clamour! Direct her Steps in Virtue's never-erring paths, and if when Nature calls her hence 'tis given by thy dispensing gracious power, to recollect the mortal Ties of Blood, and fond parent Feeling. Grant in thy Mercy we may meet and mutually enjoy thy blest abodes. Alas! I feel the icy Hand of Death thro' all my Veins. I am chill'd the animating Warmth that flow'd around my Heart, loses apace its vital Heat——Oh! I have yet a thousand tender Things, my Child; but they are lost in misery Darkness——Bless——Bless her, Heaven! Farewel! O farewell! my dear Maria! (*Dies.*)

Was that the Father's Voice, that sell a Sacrifice
To his pernicious Daughter's baneful Love?
Do Mercy and Forgiveness wound the Heart,
That in profusion thus they meant to heal?
Yes! ev'ry Blessing meant for me is mix'd,
With such Allay of Curses in the Scale
Of Fate, they poison where they should preserve——
Poison?——perish th' subtle Drug for ever
From the World! And with it too the base Betrayer
Of my Peace and Innocence! Innocence!
'Tis credulous Guilt that Idiots scarce cou'd

Stand

Stand excus'd to plead in their Defence.
 Childhood or Dotage wou'd despise the Charge!
 Nature, in a malicious Mood, bestow'd
 On me the Gift of Years Experience,
 And the Pride of other Women to prove
 My peculiar proper Punishment.
 Had she in pity form'd me weak, unknown
 To Reason's ample fair Instruction,
 The World might then, perhaps, have pried
 What, in Justice, now their utmost Candor
 Will explode——detest——what I detest.——
 Oh then! What Folly cannot drown, let Madness
 Hide! hide from myself——hide that lov'd Object,
 (*turning to the Body.*)

From Mem'ry's Seat——divest me of all Thought!
 That in Oblivion's dark and wish'd Abode,
 I there may sink unconscious of the Load;
 Never to view, by sad Reflection's Ray,
 The fearful Horrors of this fatal Day. (*Exit.*)

Phy. Follow some, and see she is secur'd; there are
 such strong concurring Circumstances, almost amount-
 ing even to Facts join'd to Declarations she herself un-
 guardedly has made, with the intercepting of her Let-
 ter, from her Lover, that the World, with Justice,
 might arraign those as Accessaries, who, during this
 miserable Transaction, have paid Attendance on this
 unhappy Gentleman,—should she be suffered to escape,
 which, I think, is highly probable, will be attempted.

(*Exeunt Servants.*)

Stew. It has, indeed, a black and most suspicious Af-
 fect, and requires the closest Inquisition.

Phy. That shall be forthwith made before a Magi-
 strate—upon the joint Testimony of you, the Apotheca-

ry, myself, and all the Servants—if, by her Country's
publick Voice she is acquitted—is well—I shall not take
upon me to prejudge her—of this I am sure;

'Twere better far suspected Innocence should bleed,
For this abhorrent, this atrocious Deed;
And for Example's Sake, a Victim bend,
To this most just, most salutary End,
That cover'd Guilt might never hope by Fraud,
To escape th' avenging Arm of Man or God.



ACT



ACT III.

SCENE, the outside of a Prison.

Enter GOODMAN *and* a GENTLEMAN.

G E N.

GOOD Morning, Sir; you are assiduous to the last in your humane Assistance and pious Consolation to this miserable, unhappy Woman.

To open and ingenuous Minds, the sympathising Heart, as it receives no Joy superior to that of giving it; so in Afflictions heavy Task, partaking of the Burthen, it kindly lessens, tho' it cannot cure.

Godm. You give me Merit, Sir, I fear I have but slight Pretensions to: For to be just and honest with you, I must acknowledge, a Sense of Duty has enforced what sickening Nature would evade. I have, indeed, a Heart susceptible of Sympathy; but as the opposite Passion is oft too strong and virulent, mine is so open to the soft, impressive Mould, it weakens where it meant Support, and frequently has sunk me even
below

below the unhappy Object of my Pity. This I have too sensibly experienced in my Visits to the unfortunate Maria; her Fortitude in general having superior Force to mine.

Gen. I have before indeed been told, her Conduct, during the whole Time of her Confinement, has been steady, uniform; and constant; not low in her Dejection, nor too elated in suppressing it; but duly has maintained the Medium of a calm and patient Resignation, and still persisting in her Innocence.

Good. You have been well informed: In the last-mentioned point, I have repeatedly endeavoured to open the Recesses of her inmost Thinking, and draw, if possible, Confession forth: But she, unaltered still in Countenance or Conduct, firmly adhering to her purpose, has, in the most solemn, awful Manner, disavowed any the most distant Thought of injuring even her Father's Health, much less his Life.

Gen. 'Tis strange! has she a due and proper Feeling of Religious awful Truths?

Good. Most perfectly: I have seldom found one of her Sex so thoroughly vers'd in holy Writ, with more exalted, full, and clear Ideas of the Divinity. But, Sir, I must intreat your Pardon——this is the Hour she requested I would pay my last Attendance on her——Assist her in this fatal Period, and receive her latest dying Declaration.

I shall advise its being Publick——Are you inclined to hear it Sir?

Gen. I wait upon you.

(Exeunt)

SCENE

SCENE a Prison.

Maria discovered at a Table reading.

Mar. What Merit do these few short Pages hold!
What Consolation have they render'd here!
By them sustain'd, this Visitation seems less harsh;
The anxious Fears my Woman's Weakness form'd,
Are dissipated all. Now Death's Approach,
In lessening Terrors, opens to my View
A Prospect more serene and calm. Reason,
Returning to her Seat, which most I fear'd,
And madly deprecated, now instructs,
By soft religious meliorating Aid,
That Heaven in pity, proves our Strength,
Sends forth its sharpest Punishments and Pains,
Rend'ring our Lot *apparently* severe.
Nor will unveil the secret Purpose of its Wisdom,
Till it infuse, by Death, a purer Spirit,
More enlarge Ideas, and ampler Scope
Of Thought than is allow'd this mortal Frame.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Madam, a Gentleman, calls himself *Goodman*,
begs Admittance.

Mar. He comes, at my Request—Pray admit him.

*(The Servant goes out, and returns with Goodman,
then Exit.)*

This, Sir, approves the Friendship you have ever
vow'd—the Wretched rarely hold that Band unbroke—
the House of Misery is shunn'd by all—the *relentless*
Heart

Heart, obdurate, flies it—and the Compassionate, in sympathizing Pity, shun the Approach—but your extensive Friendship moves above those weak Restraints of Nature.

Goodm. Compassion, without Friendship, is an airy Shadow, the Phantom of the Mind. I do not come, indeed, to weep your Fate, but in Humanity sustain your Heart beneath the Pressure of that Weight, with which this awful Hour must bend it,

Mar. That, Sir, the nervous Principles, both divine and humane, your kind pathetic Letter so abounds with the conciliating Authors it recommends to my Perusal, have, thank Heaven! well nigh accomplished. But, give me Leave to add, the Doubts you there so earnestly request me to deliberate on, require no part of my Attention; because my Will, nor even the remotest Thought, have once contributed to give those Doubts an Entrance to my Heart.

Goodm. The Heart, too frequently, is apt to shut the Avenues that lead to its Inquietude.

Mar. The Avenues that lead to Truth and Innocence are ever open and unguarded. Oh! were my Heart as white and pure from every other Ill, as the Intentional Murder of my much-lov'd Father, Death had long since lost its Terrors: Your interposing; friendly Care to soften them, had prov'd as needless then, as now 'tis meritorious and effectual. Can it be, you should conceive I Judge so lightly of Hypocrisy? Hypocrisy in Death! with Friends! myself! the World! and awful Heaven! before whose great Tribunal a few short Moments bring me;——for, or I am deceived, the appointed Time is near approached.

Goodm.

Goodm. 'Tis almost Eight.

Mar. Why then the Period is at Hand, which, past retracting, proves too late—of *that*, be well assured, I am convinced: I stand upon the narrow Brink of Time; the Space is short, that must determine Truth from Falshood.

Goodm. Yes! Death is the Point, the fearful, th' alarming Point

To Guilt, 'twixt mortal and immortal——

The airy thin, but yet *imprevicous* Bound,

Separating Life from wide Eternity:

Baffling the Cynic's Pride, the Midnight studious Toil

Even Time's *all*-searchable revealing Glass,

Affords no *visual*, no *intellectual* Ray,

To pierce th' impenetrable Film, the Cobweb-Curtain,

That, in the same identic Act, is drawn and clos'd;

Veiling the future from the present State;

And in the *future*, still enveloping the *past*.

Mar. Most justly weigh'd! nor think I have been absent.

In searching ev'ry Thought, from which my Soul

Must *now* be purg'd, or *henceforth* ever stain'd

In black Remorse, in agonizing Pain;

In ev'ry added Horror that attends

Th' aggravated Guilt, cover'd with Falshood,

Goodm. It were a Blot to ev'ry Christian Virtue,

Longer to doubt but Sense, such Fortitude

Could hide beneath deliberate Falshood

And the fatal Stains of *dying Perjury*.

Madam, of the *intentional* Murder,

In *my* Breast, you amply are acquitted.

But should conceive it necessary too,

For your own farther Peace and Character,
 To reduce th' Clamour of th' complaining World:
 This solemn Declaration
 Should, by a publick and more open means.
 Be made, lest *my Authority* be scann'd.

Mar. The friendly Caution corresponds with ev'ry
 Other Act Humanity and pious zeal
 Conjoin'd, so largely you have furnish'd forth,
 In your beneficent Assistance, to lead me
 Through the arduous Task of my approaching Death.
 In this Advice, *my Resolution*, Sir,
 Is happily confirmed—I had, before,
 Determin'd this Declaration shou'd be public:
 And see, the Occasion is at hand:

Enter the Keeper of the Prison.

Keep. Madam, the Sheriff orders me to tell you, he
 attends below.

Mar. Will you, from me, intreat his Presence here,
 and those about him; with every other Person the A-
 partment will contain.

Keep. Madam, I shall.

Mar. Support me Heav'n! nor let my Fears now sink
 me
 Beneath the Weakness of my Sex! I feel, I feel
 The inspiring Force of thy celestial Aid:
 Renew my Strength, and mantling, flow around my
 Heart —

Enter

Enter Sheriff, &c.

Your Goodness, Sir, will pardon the presuming Liberty I took to intreat your Presence here: I have, before I leave the World, a short Remonstrance to make, which I intreat you, Sir, and all here present, to bear me Witness to.

Sher. Madam, I most sincerely wish my Power was tax'd, to render you my Service, in any Cause not so affecting as the present.

Mar. You are, as you have ever been, obligingly humane.—But to my Purpose.

The Charge that has incurred this fatal Sentence on me, is so black, so heinous a Complexion, that Nought can measure the Proportion of its *real* Weight, in any just Degree, but the *Suspicion* of so abhorr'd a Crime; which presses me with more substantial Anguish, than does the ignominious Fate I soon shall meet.—Therefore, in Right and Justice to my future Fame, if you have Pity for the injur'd Innocent, let me, with earnest Prayer, intreat you all, listen all, listen attentively to this my last, most solemn, *dying* Declaration.—

Here, in the Face Man, of God, whose Eye Searches the *inmost* Windings of the Heart;
Who will not, cannot, be deceiv'd by Fraud,
By artful Coverings, varnish'd o'er with Guile:
Here, in his Presence, to whose tremendous Throne
I now am journeying to a *near* Approach,
I thus pronounce my perfect Innocence,
Th' utter Detestation of a consenting Will,
To my much honour'd, much lamented Father's Death.
To credulous *Folly* is my own Guilt;

My credulous Folly is my own Guilt:
 A Guilt, that no Attonement can suffice.
 Not this, my equitable Fate allots.
 These are, I am told, unkindly Rumours spread,
 That, by my Hand, a most endearing Mother fell;
 And with her too, a Friend I much esteem'd and lov'd.
 To the same Power I thus appeal,
 And make Profession of my Innocence.
 Next, I intreat, in soft Humanity,
 You make it known, I die in perfect Peace
 With all the World. Fully acquit my Judges;
 With Gratitude reflect upon their Clemency,
 And thank their open and ingenuous Conduct.
 My Heart, enlarg'd and free with mild Composure,
 Now can meet my Fate in calm Serenity;
 Look forward to the blissful Seats above,
 Where all is tranquil Peace, harmonious Love:
 Where fatal Error, wilful or unknown,
 Is judg'd impartial, at the Almighty Throne.
 And, Oh! may *that*, so justly punish'd here,
 Of which my Hands are guilty, but my Heart is clear,
 In Mercy stand the expiating Plea,
 And wash my Soul, from others, white and free.

(Is led off to Execution.)

Manent two Gentlemen.

1st. Gen. •Is it in Nature's Strength, when standing
 on the Verge of dread Eternity, thus to mock the dire
 Alarm, and play the Hypocrite with Heaven's tremen-
 dous Wrath? Surely no.

2d. Gen.

2d Gen. I would not chuse to judge with Rigour, nor suffer my Humanity to captivate my Reason, but, I confess, they are at Varience here. Hope of Life, from thus persisting to the last in Innocence, cannot, be her Motive: And yet she might, perhaps, conceive the Sheriff had some private Power given him, if, at the Instant of approaching Death, she still continued firm in such professions, to stay, at least the Execution, till those in fuller Power should be made acquainted with it; and then the Means to farther Mercy, she, possibly might think, wou'd not be rendered difficult.

1st Gen. Dangerous Expedient? to barter thus with Heaven, eternal Punishment, for a precarious, temporary Life.

2d Gen. Pardon me, Sir, I do not venture to pronounce it more than a Suggestion; but such a one as, I confess, the Facts upon her Trial, and some unguarded Words fallen heretofore from her, seem, with some Degree of Truth, to warrant. And yet I readily acknowledge, there appeared such equal Constancy, such Strength of Mind, such Resignation to the Will of Heaven, that seem beyond the Power of Art and cold Hypocrisy.

1st Gen. If it were Hypocrisy, it so resembles Truth that the Decision is not, I'm sure, in Man, but Heaven alone to arbitrate.

2d Gen. And should it stand against her, Mercy wou'd change Complexion, turn to reddest Wrath, and, for a While, resign her Seat above.

1st Gen.

1st. Gen. 'Twere, surely, most humane, since there
is left no Medium for the Judgment not to incline to
that, which prompts Severity and harsh Construction:—
If innocent, her present Fate is Mercy.

If otherwise, let soft Compassion draw the Veil,
Of kind Oblivion o'er the dreadful Tale.

4 AP 54





EPILOGUE.

TO you, dread Judges of the Pit, I'm come,
 To know our bashful Poet's final Doom
 Yonder he stands, in a most piteous Case,
 Dreading to hear what Sentence you shall pass:
 He hops, however, you'll espouse his Cause.
 And crown his well-meant Labours with Applause.

His Tale is fact, his Scenes are moving too,
 Perhaps you'll say; — ~~but then~~ there's nothing new:
 Each Scene, ~~before~~ 'tis drawn, is too well known,
 And Language without Shew will ne'er go down.
 There's not one Battle fought upon the Stage;
 No Dress, no Pomp to please the giddy Age.

We own the Charge: — We for Instruction wrot:
 By such Examples Children should be taught.
 No Scenes before their Eyes should e'er be plac'd;
 But those, where Virtue's crown'd, and Vice disgrac'd.

F I N I S.